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By-Johnston, Archie B.

FILI, A Pioneer with Potential.

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This report presented a review of the Florida Inter-American Learning Institute (FILI), which began at Tallahassee in March 1968. FILI was designed as a "half-way h use" where foreign students could increase their ability to communicate in English. Students enroll for one or two 11-week periods during which they receive instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. When students have reached an established level of proficiency they are permitted to attend regular courses as unofficial auditors and thereby gain exposure to classroom requirements similar to those of institutions where they will pursue their academic career. Three additional phases of the program that have not yet been implemented will provide: Spanish instruction for American students planning to study in Latin America; English instruction for international entrepreneurs who wish to do business with American firms; and Spanish instruction for American businessmen who wish to expand their enterprises. A junior college international center to serve as a clearinghouse for foreign students applying to, or enrolled at, a Florida junior college, is also planned. A fact sheet showing enrollments and nations represented in the program, institutions students have transferred to, and the program faculty and staff was included. (MB)

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TALLAHASSEE JUNIOR COLLEGE

Office of Institutional Research

FIII, A Pioneer With Potential

JC 690 321

Report No. 7

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Archie B. Johnston

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

FLORIDA INTER-AMERICAN LEARNING INSTITUTE (FILI)

Tallahassee Junior College

444 APPLEYARD DRIVE

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304

CABLE ADDRESS: TALJUCOL

PHONE 576-5181

FILI, A Pioneer With Potential

In March, 1968, after nearly two years of planning, the Florida Inter-American Learning Institute (FILI) began operations at Tallahassee Junior College. Almost from the moment of opening, the FILI program was accepted and today is an unqualified success. Support for FILI has been generous and came from State, County and City levels. Businessmen and local legislators joined with educators in financing and providing the initial physical facilities required. The Institute continues to enjoy the interest of its "founding fathers."

FILI was conceived as another plank in the bridge of understanding being constructed between the Americas. Students from many countries were experiencing severe difficulties with their college studies because of a lack of familiarity with our customs and a limited English language proficiency. As a result, many were returning to their homeland embittered against our country and frustrated rather than educated. The loss of understanding was greater than the actual monetary cost to both the student and the institution. FILI was designed as a "half-way house" where the student could increase his ability to communicate in English.

The initial students who wished to pursue a course of studies in Florida's Junior Colleges and Universities came from the nation of Colombia. Scholarships were arranged by the Florida-Colombia Alliance, a program of the Secretary of State's office. Before the initial academic quarter was completed, requests had been received from students in other countries requesting similar training. The inclusion of these other students proved an added boon in that it reduced, but unfortunately did not eliminate, conversations in Spanish before and after classes. Ninety-three percent of the 184 students who have attended FILI thus far are Colombians. Eight-six percent of the FILI graduates are currently enrolled in institutions of higher learning in Florida. (Attached is a Fact Sheet which summarizes certain logistical data.)

English language is taught at three levels in all four of the skills: reading, writing, speaking and understanding. Students receive 25 hours of instruction per week for an academic quarter - 11 weeks. To attain required proficiency, some take two terms thus remaining at FILI for a maximum allowable stay of 22 weeks. Each student pays out-of-state tuition and all fees while at FILI since the parent junior college does not grant scholarships. They also pay for room and board either at a dormitory, apartment or Tallahassee family with whom they may be living. Obviously, this is not a give-away program but rather is a self-help form of bootstrap progress.

Students who have reached an established level of proficiency are permitted to attend at no extra cost regular junior college courses in the status of an "unofficial auditor." In this manner, they are exposed to classroom requirements similar to those of institutions at which they will pursue their academic careers. Most students immediately become aware of their shortcomings and apply themselves more diligently to their FILI studies. Auditors must still attend intensive English language courses, daily, in the areas of their greatest weaknesses.

The future of FILI seems bright since its services are expected to be in greater demand in the years ahead. Over one-half of the 110,000 international students in the United States this year come from the so called "developing nations." All of the FILI students come from nations who are striving to develop their economics and these are all non-English speaking countries.

In addition to administering to the ever-increasing numbers of students who are coming to the United States, FILI expects to initiate, at the proper time, three additional phases which were built into the program at the time of its inception:

Phase II - Providing Spanish language instruction to American students who wish to initiate or continue their studies in Latin America;

Phase III - Teaching English to international entrepreneurs who desire to do business with firms in Florida and the United States.

Phase IV - Providing Spanish language instruction to United States businessmen who desire to expand their enterprises into other nations.

Added Service - A Junior College International Center to serve as a clearinghouse for international students applying to, or enrolled at, Florida's 31 junior colleges.

What does FILI mean to Florida today?

Having an Institute of international proportions located here means Florida will become one of the windows through which students will first see the United States. Their first impressions will be ultra-important in their own countries since they can by no means be considered suspect. FILI has no axes to grind: only a service to offer.

Students from all nations of the world who come to Florida to attend FILI stay in this State for two, or even four, years of college level study. And, contrary to popular belief, foreign students do contribute to the economies of the locales in which they live. Although many have academic scholarships they, as well as thousands without assistance, must sleep, eat, travel and be entertained. The money spent represents new dollars placed into the economy of our cities which would otherwise go elsewhere.

It has become apparent that many students from foreign countries are not familiar with our college and university system and as a consequence use a "scatter-gun" approach

to selecting an institution at which they can pursue a desired course of study. They write to a dozen or so colleges, hoping to receive a letter of acceptance from one. Consequently, a dozen or so admissions officers must scan the applicant's credentials and determine whether or not the student's qualifications and goals match the institution's requirements and curricula. All this costs time and money.

FILI plans to undertake the task of coordinating student requests with institutional programs. The Center will make an evaluation of the student's qualifications, determine language proficiency, match with junior college offerings and make a recommendation to the college concerned. FILI presently enjoys the confidence of Florida's junior college leadership by having only recommended qualified graduates for admittance to their institutions. This confidence is deeply appreciated and will be an inspiration in the future.

The world begs for trained, understanding and intelligent leadership. Undoubtedly, the international students coming to Florida and the United States to study are the potential business, governmental and educational leaders of their nations. This is the basic premise which makes every faculty and staff member of FILI so keenly aware of his or her responsibility to produce nothing but quality graduates from

the program. Each is dedicated to the principle of teaching and has the self-satisfaction of being a member of a group which depends, not solely upon classrooms, electronics, or gadgetry, but basically upon a sincere desire to help the world become a more understanding environment through person-to-person communication.

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FILI FACT SHEET

March 1, 1968 - May 1, 1969

FILI is currently in its fifth quarter of operation at Tallahassee Junior College and certain factual information will undoubtedly be of special interest to those who may have need for the unique services offered.

ENROLLMENTS

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Spring Quarter - March 1968	30
Summer Quarter - June 1968	32
Fall Quarter - August 1968	26
Winter Quarter - January 1969	42
Spring Quarter - March 1969	54
TOTAL (FILI's First Year)	184

NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED AND/OR APPLICANTS

Colombia	Iran	Panama	Turkey	Israel
Korea	Cuba	Costa Rica	Peru	Honduras
China	Mexico	Greece	Brazil	Portugal
Yugoslavia	Venezuela	Thailand	Guatemala	Japan

WHERE FILI STUDENTS GO

Florida Junior Colleges
Florida Universities
Purdue University
Georgia Tech
El Centro Junior College
U. of New York, Buffalo
Syracuse University
University of Minnesota
Colorado School of Mines
University of Texas
Boeing Flight Training, Seattle
University of Illinois
University of Arizona
Return to Colombia

FILI STAFF AND FACULTY

Dr. Archie B. Johnston, Director
Mr. Laurence L. Benson, Assistant
Mr. William Raup, Head of Department

Mrs. Barbara Nudelman, Faculty
Mrs. Cynthia Shoup, Faculty
Mrs. Karen Pacheco, Faculty
Miss Gene Millard, Faculty
Mrs. Beth Novinger, Faculty